The Effect of Monitoring and Evaluation Practices on the Performance of Projects: A Case of Children Survival Project Implemented by Compassion International Kigali, Rwanda

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Abstract

The general objective of this study was to assess the effect of monitoring and evaluation practices on the performance of children survival projects in Compassion International Kigali. The study had the following specific objectives: establish the effect of the M&E planning process on the performance of the children survival project in Kigali; examine the effect of communication in M&E on the performance of the children's survival project in Kigali; find out the effect of human resource capacity in M&E on the performance of the children survival project in Kigali; and assess the effect of M&E stakeholders' involvement on the performance of the children's survival project in Kigali. The study population was 138 staff members of the Child Survival Project, Compassion International Rwanda, in the city of Kigali. The sample size of 103 was determined with the help of the Solvin formula. Simple random sampling used in the research's selection of study participants. Random sampling employed due to its ease and the fact that all participants are employees of the Child Survival Project at Compassion International Rwanda, which ensures that each individual has an identical possibility of being chosen. The study applied the following tools of data collection: questionnaires and documentary techniques. The researcher used the descriptive and correlation analyses computed by Statistical Package for Social Sciences 23. The Model Summary presents the results of a multiple regression analysis that includes the predictors M&E Stakeholders Involvement, Human Resource Capacity, M&E Planning Process, and Communication in M&E in relation to the dependent variable Project Performance. The value of R (0.859) indicates a strong positive correlation between the combined predictors and the dependent variable, highlighting the interplay of these factors in influencing project performance. The coefficient of determination (R Square) is 0.738, indicating that approximately 73.8% of the variability in Project Performance of Child Survival Program can be explained by the combined influence of the four predictors. Children survival projects should ensure a comprehensive and well-structured M&E planning process that clearly defines measurable goals, identifies relevant indicators, employs efficient data collection methods, aligns with beneficiary needs, facilitates communication, and enables timely interventions.

1. Introduction

Numerous experimental research findings such as Peninah (2018) investigated the monitoring and evaluation routine at United Nations Environment Program Global Environment Facility projects in Kenya and its impact on project performance. Sandrine (2018) analyzed the influence of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms on the performance of government projects in Rwanda. There had been no previous studies on the relationships between monitoring and evaluation practices and the performance of projects in Rwanda, especially in the health sector. As a result, a review of process planning, communication in M&E, stakeholder involvement, and human resource capacity conducted in order to determine their influence on project performance in this study. The project, dubbed 'Child Survival Program (CSP), launched by Compassion International-Rwanda, supports vulnerable pregnant mothers to have safe births from the time of pregnancy until a baby is three years old. As such, the researcher intends to carry out this research on monitoring and evaluation practices for the performance of projects.

Donors, beneficiaries, and stakeholders all want to see proof of how well a project is doing in comparison to its goals. A few projects were scrutinized for specific aspects of M&E practice and their impact on project performance. The majority of studies on this topic are broad in scope. Specific M&E practices such as process planning, communication in M&E, stakeholder involvement, and human resource capacity, as well as their impact on project performance, are limited to donor-funded projects in Rwanda. It is from the above that the researcher came up with the idea to conduct research on monitoring and evaluation practices and the project performance of the children survival project at Compassion International Kigali, Rwanda.

1.1 Research objectives

The general objective of this study was to assess the effect of monitoring and evaluation practices on the performance of children survival project in Compassion International Kigali.

The study had the following specific objectives:
    i.   To establish the effect of M&E Planning Process on performance of children survival project in Kigali.
   ii.   To examine the effect of communication in M&E on performance of children survival project in Kigali.
  iii.   To find out the effect of human resource capacity in M&E on performance of children survival project in Kigali.
   iv.   To assess the effect of M&E Stakeholders' involvement on performance of children survival project in Kigali.

1.2 Research hypotheses
    i.   **Hoa:** M&E Planning Process has no significant effect on performance of children survival project in Kigali.
   ii.   **Hob:** Communication in M&E doesn't have significant effect on performance of children survival project in Kigali.
  iii.   **Hoc**: There is no significant effect of human resource capacity in M&E on performance of children survival project in Kigali.
   iv.   **Hod:** There is no significant effect of M&E Stakeholders' involvement on performance of children survival project in Kigali.

2. Literature review

The debates on the M&E concept discussed in light of two theories in the subject area namely theory of change and stakeholder theory.

2.1 Theory of Change

This was developed in 1990s by Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change to model and assess exhaustive network activities. Theory of Change is a complete illustration as description of how and why a desired change is anticipated. This is reason why ToC must be considered in project planning because when you plan you set changes that you want to realize or you determine what you want to achieve, how it will be achieved and when it will be realized. The performance of the project is measured according to the indicators of changes that you have planned for.

Project management can be difficult even when you have a good understanding of the situation and a clear goal. A Theory of Change is a tool for thinking through the steps from the situation to the goal. The Theory of Change (ToC) is a causal framework of how and why a change process will happen in a particular context. It expresses the thinking behind how a particular intervention will bring about results and outlines the causal linkages between the shorter-term, intermediate, and longer-term outcomes (the outcomes pathway) along with the underlying assumptions.

The Theory of Change is both a method and an end result. A theory of change should think about the most important changes a project wishes to make, the several routes it may take to achieve those changes, and the reasoning for choosing one path over another. A theory of change is useful for methodically considering how the desired change might materialize in a dynamic external setting. It helps in organizing and prioritizing what can be done within the complexities of the real world and with the resources we have at hand. Thus, theory of change is closely related to project planning and project performance because when you plan, you also take strategies that will be useful to attain on objectives as well as goal and once goal is realized there is reality of dream or change or impact made by proper execution of plan made.

Researcher used theory of change in the study of contribution of M&E practices and project performance by assessing whether the desired changes are well designed in project management process or whether the means for realizing desired changes have been mentioned. Researcher also find out whether the desired changes have attained just by measuring project performance as theory of change can be regarded as inputs whose outcome observable in the performance of the project.

2.2 Stakeholder Theory

In 1983, Mitroff introduced the stakeholder theory which was later on advanced by Freeman. The relationship between stakeholders and organization is intended to generate value for stakeholders. The stakeholder's theory describes the way of managing various legitimate stakeholders' interests in a project. There are contractually obliged stakeholders and derivative stakeholders have a stake in the project because of their capacity to affect project work, organization, or other stakeholders (Kolesnikov, 2014).

The ability to manage stakeholders is critical to the successful implementation of megaproject deliverables. Throughout the project life cycle, the project team is concerned with meeting project objectives that fully address anticipations of stakeholders. However, identifying stakeholders and crafting project brief that effectively addresses their frequently conflicting set

of requirements and desires is significant task that must be undertaken when developing project strategic objectives. The theory presupposes that project managers must link to the organizational grid, identify, and manage possible stakeholder propositions inside a project Megaproject coordinators are unlikely to succeed unless they consider the expectations and wants of the project's most powerful stakeholders. Stakeholders may have a big say in whether or not a project is considered a success. Even if the project is completed on schedule, on budget, and within the scope of the project, it is unlikely to be considered successful it falls short of the beliefs of influential stakeholders (Kolesnikov, 2014).

Stakeholder Theory employed in this research, For the purpose of analyzing stakeholders in M&E and their influence on performance of children survival project in Kigali as in specific objective of the study there are one focused on management participation and stakeholder involvement.

3. Research methodology

This section demonstrates research design and population. It also describes the sample selection and data collection techniques. It also describes how data collected, processed, and analyzed to draw conclusions.

3.1 Study design

This study is descriptive design, correlative design, qualitative design, quantitative design, and primary and secondary data-based design. For quantitative data, it presented in figures and statistically analyzed. Qualitative data collected using open questions and quantitative data collected using closed ended questions. The correlation analysis assessed via different indicators as defined in the conceptual framework.

3.2 Population and sample size

The study population was 138 staff members of the Child Survival Project, Compassion International Rwanda, in the city of Kigali.

The sample size was determined with the help of the Solvin formula.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

N: Population-size, and e is the marginal of error (5%).

$$n = \frac{138}{1 + 138(0.05)^2} = \frac{138}{1 + 0.345} = \frac{138}{1.345} = 103$$

Simple random sampling used in the research's selection of study participants. Random sampling employed due to its ease and the fact that all participants are employees of the Child Survival Project at Compassion International Rwanda, which ensures that each individual has an identical possibility of being chosen.

3.3 Data collection instruments
The study applied the following tools of data collection: questionnaire and documentary techniques.

The researcher employed certain sources throughout the historical analysis process, after determining the significance of writings to this investigation and then classifying them on the writings, which then transcribed into a computer file for compilation if needed.

The researcher employed certain sources throughout the historical analysis process, after determining the significance of writings to this investigation and then classifying them on the writings, which then transcribed into a computer file for compilation if needed.

The researcher was able to develop a deep understanding of the topics at hand thanks to in-depth interviews with key informants. Managerial staff selected because of their roles in the project and the knowledge they possess about its outcome.

3.4 Data analysis

In this method, the researcher used the descriptive and correlation analyses computed by Statistical Package for Social Sciences 23. The study utilized multiple linear regression analysis to draw inferences from the survey. The following regression analysis model used:

$Y=\beta_0+\beta_1X_1 +\beta_2 X_2 +\beta_3 X_3 +\beta_4 X_4 +\mathcal{E}$:

Y is Project performance,

β_0 is constant coefficient

X_1 is M&E Planning Process,

X_2 is Communication in M&E,

X_3 is human resource capacity,

X_4 is M&E Stakeholders' involvement,

4. Research findings

This section of the chapter focused on presenting the study's results and providing a thorough analysis of the collected data. Descriptive statistics (such as percentages, means, and standard deviations) and inferential methods (such as regression and correlation analyses) were used to shed light on the findings, which were presented with discussions of the study's aims. The SPSS statistical program was used to carry out the aforementioned analytic processes. There were 103 population included in the survey's sample, and importantly, 100% of the questionnaires sent out were filled out and returned.

Table 1: Correlations

		M&E Planning Process	Communication in M&E	Human resource capacity	M&E Stakeholders involvement	Project performance
M&E Planning Process	Pearson Correlation	1	.633**	.543**	.665**	.728**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N		103	103	103	103
Communication in M&E	Pearson Correlation		1	.442**	.746**	.774**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.000	.000	.000
	N			103	103	103
Human resource capacity	Pearson Correlation			1	.365**	.517**
	Sig. (2-tailed)				.000	.000
	N				103	103
M&E Stakeholders involvement	Pearson Correlation				1	.768**
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.000
	N					103
Project performance	Pearson Correlation					1
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N					103

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: Field data, August 2023

The correlation matrix presented in Table 1 indicates strong positive relationships between various variables related to monitoring and evaluation practices and project performance. The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.728 between M&E Planning Process and Project Performance indicates a strong positive relationship. This relationship is statistically significant at a 0.05 level 5, implying that the observed correlation is unlikely to have occurred due to random chance. The significance level reinforces the notion that a well-defined and effective M&E planning process is associated with higher project performance. The correlation coefficient of 0.774 between Communication in M&E and Project Performance signifies a robust positive correlation. This correlation is also statistically significant at a 0.05 level, reinforcing the strong link between effective communication practices in monitoring and evaluation and improved project performance. The correlation coefficient of 0.517 between Human Resource Capacity and Project Performance indicates a moderate positive relationship. This correlation is statistically significant at a 0.05 level, indicating that having a capable and skilled human resource base in the monitoring and evaluation process significantly contributes to better project performance. The correlation coefficient of 0.768 between M&E Stakeholders Involvement and Project Performance indicates a strong positive correlation. This correlation is also statistically significant at a 0.05 level, underscoring the substantial impact of active stakeholder engagement in the monitoring and evaluation process on project performance. These findings align with Hwang and Lim (2013), which underscored the significant role of effective planning, communication, human resources, and stakeholder involvement in achieving successful project outcomes. Thus, the correlations in this table provide empirical support for the relationships between different aspects of monitoring and evaluation practices and project performance.

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.859[a]	.738	.727	7.46816

a. Predictors: (Constant), M&E Stakeholders involvement, Human resource capacity, M&E Planning Process, Communication in M&E

Source: Field data, August 2023

The Model Summary in Table 2 presents the results of a multiple regression analysis that includes the predictors M&E Stakeholders Involvement, Human Resource Capacity, M&E Planning Process, and Communication in M&E in relation to the dependent variable Project Performance. The value of R (0.859) indicates a strong positive correlation between the combined predictors and the dependent variable, highlighting the interplay of these factors in influencing project performance. The coefficient of determination (R Square) is 0.738, indicating that approximately 73.8% of the variability in Project Performance can be explained by the combined influence of the four predictors. This outcome resonates with the works Chin (2012), underscoring the pivotal role of monitoring and evaluation practices in elevating project performance. Thus, the outcomes affirm that effective planning, stakeholder engagement, human resource readiness, and communication are integral for successful project performance in children survival project in compassion international Kigali, Rwanda.

Table 3: ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	15398.423	4	3849.606	69.022	.000[b]
1	Residual	5465.790	98	55.773		
	Total	20864.214	102			

a. Dependent Variable: Project performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), M&E Stakeholders involvement, Human resource capacity, M&E Planning Process, Communication in M&E

Source: Field data, August 2023

The results in Table 3, as indicated by the ANOVA, provide compelling evidence of the impact of the combined predictors - M&E Stakeholders Involvement, Human Resource Capacity, M&E Planning Process, and Communication in M&E - on Project Performance. The substantial F value (69.022) coupled with the significantly low p-value (0.000) reaffirms the statistical significance of the model. This aligns with the insights offered by Dutt (2017), highlighting the significance of these predictors in influencing project performance. The findings emphasize that effective stakeholder involvement, well-prepared human resources, robust planning, and clear communication collectively contribute to enhancing project outcomes. This resonates with the fundamental tenets of monitoring and evaluation practices.

Table 4: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	12.944	4.208		3.076	.003
	M&E Planning Process	.983	.319	.241	3.085	.003
	Communication in M&E	1.043	.259	.331	4.034	.000
1	Human resource capacity	.641	.322	.125	1.993	.049
	M&E Stakeholders involvement	1.025	.273	.315	3.752	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Project performance

In Table 4, the regression coefficients offer insights into the relationships between the predictors (M&E Planning Process, Communication in M&E, Human Resource Capacity, M&E Stakeholders Involvement) and Project Performance. The significant p-values for all predictors (M&E Planning Process, Communication in M&E, Human Resource Capacity, M&E Stakeholders Involvement) reaffirm their individual contributions to project performance. The constant term is 12.944, indicating the expected value of the dependent variable (Project Performance) when all predictor variables are zero. The unstandardized coefficients show the change in the dependent variable for each unit change in the respective predictor, while holding other variables constant. Communication in M&E has a coefficient of 1.043, indicating that a one-unit increase in Communication in M&E corresponds to a 1.043 increase in Project Performance. Similarly, Human Resource Capacity has a coefficient of 0.641, implying that an increase in Human Resource Capacity by one unit leads to a 0.641 increase in Project Performance. M&E Stakeholders Involvement shows a coefficient of 1.025, indicating that a one-unit increase in M&E Stakeholders Involvement results in a 1.025 increase in Project Performance. All predictor variables have significant p-values, with Communication in M&E ($p = 0.000$), Human Resource Capacity ($p = 0.049$), and M&E Stakeholders Involvement ($p = 0.000$) demonstrating statistical significance. This aligns with the findings Hwang and Lim (2013), demonstrating that these variables play key roles in achieving positive project outcomes. It is evident that when these components are effectively managed, they significantly influence project performance, validating the importance of incorporating these practices into the children survival project in Kigali.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to assess the impact of monitoring and evaluation practices on the performance of the children survival project in Compassion International Kigali, Rwanda. The specific objectives focused on the influence of M&E planning process, communication in M&E, human resource capacity in M&E, and M&E stakeholders' involvement on project performance. The findings provide compelling evidence that these aspects of monitoring and evaluation have a significant positive effect on project performance. The study's hypotheses were all supported, demonstrating that M&E planning process, communication, human resource capacity, and stakeholder involvement are key factors contributing to the success of the children survival project.

Through a comprehensive analysis of data and applying statistical techniques, the study's results underscore the crucial role that well-defined M&E planning, effective communication, skilled human resources, and meaningful stakeholder engagement play in achieving project goals. The outcomes of this study provide valuable insights for project managers, development organizations, and policymakers, emphasizing the need to prioritize and invest in robust monitoring and evaluation practices to ensure the success of projects aimed at improving child survival and well-being.

Overall, this study contributes to the growing body of knowledge in the field of project management and development by highlighting the specific aspects of monitoring and evaluation that can significantly impact project performance. The findings emphasize the importance of a holistic and strategic approach to M&E practices, recognizing their role in driving positive outcomes and fostering sustainable development. As a result, this study provides valuable guidance for practitioners and decision-makers seeking to enhance the effectiveness and impact of projects focused on child survival and well-being.

6. Recommendations

➢ Children survival projects should ensure a comprehensive and well-structured M&E planning process that clearly defines measurable goals, identifies relevant indicators, employs efficient data collection methods, aligns with beneficiary needs, facilitates communication, and enables timely interventions.

➢ Children survival projects should prioritize effective communication strategies within their M&E processes, ensuring clear understanding between project teams and beneficiaries.

➢ Children survival projects should invest in building a skilled and capable human resource capacity for M&E activities.

➢ Children survival projects should actively engage stakeholders throughout the M&E process. Collaborating with beneficiaries, partners, and relevant stakeholders fosters ownership, alignment of objectives, and the generation of valuable insights.

7. Acknowledgments

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